

Attachment 4: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Objectives that can help achieve Rhode Island's ambitious development goal are found in the *Economic Development Policies and Plan*, an element of the State Guide Plan that succeeded the *Economic Development Strategy* when approved by the State Planning Council on April 13, 2000. As in the *Strategy*, the objectives of the *Policies and Plan* are meant to be both attainable and measurable. They address broad topics and provide a basis for organizing the policies that follow each objective.

Policies are discrete steps toward accomplishment of an objective, with each policy representing a single action. Each objective is the end or target of a series of such actions. Those objectives and policies are as follows:

- Objective A: Employment

Provide at least 34,200 new employment opportunities for Rhode Island residents, by the year 2020, achieving and maintaining full employment and reducing underemployment.

Policies to achieve Objective A:

1. Improve opportunities for productive employment with highest priority given to those economic development activities that have the potential to upgrade the skill and wage levels of the state's resident labor force. Target public economic development assistance of any type to those applicants that can increase the average wage rate in their industrial sectors.
2. Promote expansion and recruitment of industries that offer career opportunities for both our secondary and post-secondary school graduates.
3. Encourage and expand those social services, both in the public and private sector, that are necessary to facilitate the broadest labor force participation, including training, job placement, child care, health care, and transportation services.
4. Promote and develop the use of mass transit in order to eliminate spatial barriers to employment opportunities. Encourage development in densities high enough to facilitate the economical provision of mass transit.
5. Emphasize diversity of industry toward those sectors that demonstrate a steady employment pattern, avoid seasonal layoffs, and withstand cyclical downturns of the economy.

6. Expand educational and job-training opportunities that have as their primary objective providing the state's labor force with those marketable skills sought by employers that provide above average wage rates. Provide lifelong training and education opportunities that make the labor force competitive.

7. Eliminate barriers to employment based on race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnic origin through education and training as well as consistent enforcement of applicable laws.

8. Encourage communities to plan for and accommodate the socioeconomic impacts of industrial and commercial development, such as by providing a variety of housing options to meet the needs of the local labor force.

9. Encourage industry, particularly those that employ urban populations, to locate in urban areas and to take advantage of public and alternative transportation modes where feasible.

- Objective B: Facilities

Work with economic development practitioners to encourage sustainable industrial and commercial development that advances the long-term economic and environmental well-being of the state, and is consistent with the State Land Use Policies and Plan, the Industrial Land Use Plan, and other applicable elements of the State Guide Plan.

Policies to achieve Objective B:

1. Reclaim brownfields by environmental remediation and encourage use of the "built environment."

2. Conserve and enhance desirable existing industrial areas, office complexes, and concentrations of service activities to maximize the investment and utilization of existing infrastructure. New or expanded public sewer and water services and highways should be provided to industrial and commercial development only where such development is appropriate in terms of the natural constraints imposed by the land, air, and water in the immediate vicinity of such development, and where the area is being developed at an intensity that is consistent with state land use policy, and when such development will not promote wasteful use of resources. When possible, an industry's needs should be matched with the appropriate site in order to maximize the return on the infrastructure investment.

3. Ensure adequate investment to maintain and improve a balanced, intermodal transportation system that meets the needs of the state's commerce and labor force. Make the transit system and intermodal connections user-

friendly for all members of the riding public. Maintain shipping channels and recognize the economic potential of T. F. Green Airport and other state airports.

4. Encourage higher densities, mixed uses, careful design, transit and pedestrian-friendly land use and development patterns, and location near existing hubs and corridors to avoid “sprawl.” Maximize the use of alternative modes of transportation, such as bicycling, walking, and mass transit.

5. Relate industrial and commercial development to overall land use by promoting the use of development controls and performance standards that mitigate conflicts with other land uses and activities.

6. Encourage investment by the public and private sectors that will stabilize and improve housing and commerce in deteriorating urban areas.

7. Promote the control of land development along arterial highways in order to preserve their functional integrity, capacity, safety, and appearance.

8. Contribute to the stabilization and redevelopment of central business districts through the provision of supporting services such as transportation access, parking, utilities, and police and fire protection, as well as the adaptive reuse of historic buildings that contribute to the commercial and cultural economic base of these areas. Public subsidy enticements to industries other than traded industries should only be considered where they contribute to the stabilization and redevelopment of such areas. Viable economic reuses should be found for historic buildings that can contribute to the economy.

9. Designate sites in developing communities and in or near smaller urban centers in rural communities for industrial or commercial development as needed to meet state and municipal economic objectives. Select locations with natural characteristics favorable for economic development that have or can be supplied with the public facilities and services necessary to support the type of economic activity planned, and that are readily accessible to a labor force. These locations must also be consistent with the general development patterns set forth in the state land use policies and plan element and with all other applicable elements or provisions of the State Guide Plan. Sites selected, and the economic activities that use these sites, should be compatible with the scale, historic character, and other aspects of the surrounding community.

10. Locate industrial development causing other than domestic waste discharges in areas served either by public sewerage systems or by appropriately permitted and maintained private systems.

11. Support agricultural base to include turf, ornamentals, vineyards, forestry, field crops, dairy and livestock. Seek alternative niche markets to support smaller, more diverse farms. Promote the preservation of prime

farmland and provide the technical support to keep agriculture environmentally and economically sustainable.

12. Encourage development of sport and commercial fisheries both inshore and offshore up to levels of maximum sustainable yield by supporting the provision of appropriate infrastructure, research and training facilities, aquaculture, management activities, and enforcement of water quality standards. Reserve suitable port access areas for commercial fishing vessels.

13. Encourage new industrial development in the coastal zone that places a priority on the maximum efficient and appropriate utilization of existing marine infrastructure, such as the Port of Providence and Quonset Davisville.

14. Encourage areas used for commercial development to be selected and configured to make the most efficient use of scarce shoreline locations.

15. Promote tourism as a major industry, and encourage and support the use of the wide range of facilities that make up the industry's infrastructure.

16. Encourage the reuse of industrial land as industrial land to the maximum extent feasible.

17. Note areas most vulnerable to natural hazards and locate development away from these areas whenever possible. Provide appropriate mitigating measures wherever such hazards exist.

- Objective C: Climate

Maintain a business environment conducive to the birth, sustenance, and growth of suitable industry and commerce.

Policies to achieve Objective C:

1. Promote the implementation of a growth development strategy giving priority to economic development programs directed at the promotion, maintenance, and expansion of existing firms.

2. Encourage and promote locally and regionally initiated economic development efforts as set forth in the economic development elements of local comprehensive plans.

3. Attract and give assistance to those types of industry that best capitalize on Rhode Island's strengths, and are potentially most beneficial to the state's employment, the needs of firms, resources, fiscal soundness, and related development goals.

4. Expand all markets, in state, national, and international, for the state's products and services, through improved communications and promotion.
5. Encourage reservation of prime industrial sites through protective regulation or acquisition, recognizing the importance of factors such as topography and soil characteristics, availability of water and sewer service, access to transportation facilities, proximity to water bodies, and availability of labor.
6. Maintain public infrastructure, both structural (physical) and non-structural (social). Provide additional infrastructure where it is clearly demonstrated as necessary and in a manner that will protect the long-term health of the state's natural and fiscal resources.
7. Recognize Rhode Island's quality of life as an asset that improves the state's "business climate." Protect and enhance the quality of life by promoting sustainable development.
8. Recognize cultural diversity and heritage as major assets to be protected and promoted.
9. Recognize Narragansett Bay as a major economic resource.
10. Encourage initiatives to ensure a competitive and fair tax environment for all Rhode Island residents and businesses.
11. Work with local government officials to study and better understand the relationship between land use and property tax.
12. Recognize education as an essential component of economic development.
13. Encourage and promote initiatives aimed at creating competitive utility rates.
14. Enhance the affordability and reliability of the state's energy supplies by pursuing energy conservation and supporting wider use of indigenous renewable energy resources where environmentally benign and economically feasible.